



CCW 2014 Testimony

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PUBLIC SAFETY & SECURITY COMMITTEE

February 18, 2014

I am Mark Boughton, Mayor of Danbury and the Chair of the Connecticut Conference of Municipalities (CCM) Task Force on School Safety and Building Security.

The Connecticut Conference of Municipalities (CCM) is Connecticut's statewide association of towns and cities and the voice of local government - your partners in governing Connecticut. Our members represent over 92% of Connecticut's population. We appreciate the opportunity to testify on bills of interest to towns and cities.

CCM <u>supports</u> SB 98 "An Act Establishing Standards For Public School Security Personnel" which would establish standards and training for school security personnel that are not current or retired police officers.

The tragic events that occurred at Sandy Hook Elementary School present a stark reminder of how vulnerable our children's safety can be. As a former high school teacher, I know that education is paramount for our children's success, but, we also have a duty to protect them while they are in our care. As elected officials, we have the duty to initiate measures to protect our students from violence while in school.

School Resource Officers (SROs) are a valuable resource to prevent violence and ensure safety within our schools. These are sworn law enforcement officers that have undergone basic police training as well as advanced training to serve as SROs. The cost to assign an SRO to a school however can be burdensome due to the cost of training and assigning these officers to schools, as well taking them off routine patrols.

Many schools throughout the state utilize private security officials to protect students and staff. These officials may have similar duties as an SRO however there are no set of uniform standards or training. This proposal would ensure that non-law enforcement officials serving as security staff within schools have similar standards and training without the added cost and burden of assigning a police officer within the school. SB 98 would ensure that these officials are equipped to provide a safe learning environment, and a valuable resource for school staff and students.

We welcome additional dialogue on a collaborative approach in protecting our most precious commodity – our children – from further violence.

CCM urges the Committee to *favorably report* SB 98.



If you have any questions, please contact Mike Muszynski, Senior Legislative Associate of CCM at mmuszynski@ccm-ct.org or (203) 500-7556.